

אור פני משה

שיחות מוסר על התורה
מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר
רבינוביץ זצ"ל

*Shmuessen from
Harav Moshe
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פרשת מקץ
חנוכה

Volume 6 Issue # 10

לעילוי נשמת
מנן הג"ר חיים ליב בן הג"ר רפאל
אלתר הלוי שמואלביץ זצ"ל
לכבוד היארצייט ג' טבת

שיחות מוסר על התורה מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר רבינוביץ זצוק"ל

פרשת מקץ – חנוכה

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וְעַתָּה יֵרָא פָּרֹחַ אִישׁ נְבוֹן וְחָכָם וַיִּשְׁיִתְהוּ עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
(בראשית מ"א ל"ג)

'And now, let Paroh seek a discerning, wise man, and he should appoint him over the land of Mitzrayim.'

אֲזַ אֲגַמֵּר בְּשִׁיר מְזִמֹּר חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: (פיוט מעוז צור)

Then I will complete with a song of praise the Chanukas HaMizbeach.

Chanukah – The Yom Tov of the חנוכת המזבח

As we pass through these elevated days of Chanukah, it is important for us to be aware of an element of the Yom Tov which often may go overlooked. When we learn about Chanukah, we generally focus on the *Mesirus Nefesh* of the *Chashmonaim*, and on the *chessed* of Hashem Who performed the miracles of the oil and of the victory of the *Chashmonaim*. Indeed, these are perhaps the primary themes of the Yom Tov, and we learn from them to emulate the *Avodah* of the *Chashmonaim*, and to thank Hashem for saving us from the hands of the *Yevanim* and allowing us to serve Him throughout the generations.

However, there is an additional element of Chanukah which focuses on what occurred in the *Bais Hamikdash* after it was reconquered from the *Yevanim*. When the *Chashmonaim* entered the *Bais Hamikdash*, they found it in a complete state of disarray and *tum'ah*. Thereupon, the *Chashmonaim* began a large-scale project of cleaning and purifying the *Bais Hamikdash*. When they completed this operation, they performed a חנוכת הבית. According to the simple explanation, it is specifically because of this event that the Yom Tov is called Chanukah¹. Moreover, the Rama writes that there is an *inyan* to have *seudos* on Chanukah as a remembrance of the *simchah* of the

¹ וכ"כ המהרש"א (ח"א שבת דף כ"א ע"ב), וז"ל ונראה לפרש דנקרא חנוכה ע"ש חנוכת המזבח, כדאמרי' בפרק ר' ישמעאל דבית חשמונאי גנוזו אבני מזבח ששקצו אנשי עו"ג לע"ז והוצרכו לבנות מזבח חדש, ולכך נקרא חנוכה, עכ"ל. וכ"כ האור זרוע (ה"ב סי' שכ"א), ועוד.

Chanukas HaBayis which occurred during these days (סימן תר"ע ס"ב). And finally, we reference the *Chanukas HaMizbeach* in *Ma'oz Tzur*, when we daven that we should have another such *Chanukas HaMizbeach* with the rebuilding of the third *Bais Hamikdash*. Clearly then, this event is also an integral aspect of the Yom Tov of Chanukah, and we must try to understand it and elevate ourselves from the lessons that we learn from it.

הכנה/Preparation

The words הנוכת המזבה are commonly translated as ‘*Dedication of the Mizbeach*’. This rendering is indeed correct, because the הנוכה specifically refers to the first time a utensil is used in the Bais Hamikdash, through which it is dedicated from then on for the Bais Hamikdash. However, more than simply *dedication*, the word הנוכה, actually comes from the word הינוך which means ‘*training*’. We refer to this same idea of הינוך when discussing the education of our children into a life of Torah and *mitzvos*. What is the concept behind ‘*Chinuch*’, whether in the *Keilim* of the Bais Hamikdash or in our children’s Torah?

It would seem to me that the word הינוך is related to the word הכנה/*preparation*. We train our children and prepare them for a life which is dedicated to Torah and *Avodas Hashem*. It is so crucial for them to have the proper start because that is what will hold them in the proper stead throughout their entire life. Similarly, when one uses a *Keli*/vessel in the Bais Hamikdash for the first time, he must perform the *Avodah* with the proper *halachos* and intentions, and through this, he steers the vessel into an existence of *kedushah* for the *Avodah*.

In fact, this concept of הכנה/*preparation* is actually alluded to in the very place where the Torah hints to Chanukah. As the *seforim* teach us, there is a hint to Chanukah in our *parshah* of Miketz, (in which Chanukah falls out almost every year).² This *remez* can be found in the *passuk* which discusses when Yosef instructed the overseer of

² With the exception of this year in which the first day of Rosh Hashanah is on Shabbos, and in which there is only one day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev. In such years, Shabbos Chanukah is on Parshas Vayeshev.

his household, to prepare food for the *Shevatim*. Yosef then expressed the words (מ"ג ט"ז) **טבח והכן** / "Slaughter the meat and **prepare it**". The letters of the words **טבח והכן**, are the same letters as הנוכה. Hence, Chanukah is hinted at in the word that means preparation, and we can thus certainly surmise that the *inyan* of הכנה/preparation is relevant to Chanukah.

When the Chashmonaim came into the Bais Hamikdosh, they began a new period of *Avodah* in the Bais Hamikdosh with *Kedushah* and *Taharah*. More than simply becoming free of the rule of the *Yevanim* and of the actual *tumah* that they brought into the Mikdosh, the Chashmonaim actively renewed their own level of *Avodah*, and began afresh with renewed vigor and excitement (ב"ה הל' הנוכה). For this new beginning, we have a Yom Tov in which to rejoice and bring the התחדשות into our own *Avodah*.

Beginning Each Task Correctly

In truth, this concept of preparation is relevant not only for children who are beginning their entire lives of Torah, but it is important for adults as well. So much depends upon how we begin each new endeavor that we undertake, be it large or small in its dimensions.

When we get up in the morning, so much depends upon how we will pull ourselves out of bed. If we will push ourselves to get up with the proper drive and excitement, we will already be in the mode of having the correct attitude in our Avodas Hashem, which can direct us throughout the day.

If, however, we laze in bed for an extra half-hour before finally rolling out of bed, we have set ourselves up for a day of laziness and self-centeredness. When the day ends in a big cloud of disappointment and failure, we have only ourselves to blame for not giving it a good start.

When we prepare for Shabbos in a calm, methodical manner, seeing to it that each job is done with z'rizus and responsibility, while being careful not to allow the yetzer hara of machlokes to creep into our homes, we will be able to enter Shabbos in a proper frame of mind. We can have some time to learn before

Shabbos starts, and we will continue from there into a beautiful Kabbalas Shabbos and Maariv. Our seudah will pass in a wonderful manner for the whole mishpacha, as inspiring Divrei Torah are shared and zemiros are sung. The Shabbos will be a true Kovod Shamayim, and the whole mishpacha will gain immensely.

On the other hand, if we enter Shabbos in a rushed state of confusion, with hard feeling felt between various family members, how much can we expect to grow or accomplish through the Shabbos?

There are so many examples even in the world around us in which everything is completely dependent upon the proper start.

When one is buttoning his shirt, he needs to make sure that the first button that he buttons is properly aligned into its appropriate buttonhole. Afterward, he can lose his concentration completely, and the rest of the buttons will still end up in their appropriate holes. If, however, he misaligns the first button, he can spend a half-hour afterward trying to get the buttons right, and they'll still be off mark. The only way he can get it right is if he unbuttons completely and starts over again.

Similarly, when a bone in one's body is broken, great care must be taken that the bone is reset properly before the healing process begins. Otherwise, the bone will grow improperly, and it will eventually need to be rebroken so that it can begin the healing process anew.

Preparation for Mitzvos

The concept of proper preparation is important for the individual *mitzvos* that we perform as well. If we simply 'race' into a *mitzvah*, it will often be done haphazardly and in a state of confusion. When, however, we prepare properly and adequately, the *mitzvah* is done in a heartfelt and conscientious manner. It is well known that the *Chassidim* place a greater emphasis on the *brachos* which precede *Krias Shema* than they place on the actual *Krias Shema*. This is not simply a case of misplaced priorities based on ignorance about what is the *mitzvah* and what is the leadup to it, but this is rather based on

a well thought-out *hashkafah*. Their mindset is that once they begin their *Avodah* before *Krias Shema* on the 'right foot', the actual *mitzvah* of *Krias Shema* will follow on its own.

Aside for the importance of preparation for a *mitzvah* in regard to ensuring that the *mitzvah* itself is done properly, the preparation has a great importance in its own right. By investing time and energy into preparation for a *mitzvah*, we demonstrate that the *mitzvah* is important to us.

Part of what makes the Yomim Tovim of Sukkos and Pesach so meaningful is the amount of preparation that they entail before the actual Yom Tov. By the time we sit down to our Pesach Seder or our seudah in the sukkah, we are ready to 'enjoy' the Yom Tov; the real toil for the mitzvah took place in the weeks preceding the Yom Tov. Similarly, by learning the halachos and the inyanim of Chanukah or any other Yom Tov before it arrives, one can then properly appreciate the Yom Tov as he goes through it.

There is, in fact, a clear source in *halacha* for the importance of the preparation for a *mitzvah*, and even that it has greater importance than the actual *mitzvah*. The *halacha* is that the lighting of the Menorah in the Bais Hamikdosh was kosher even if it was performed by a non-Kohen (עיינין רמב"ם הל' ביאת מקדש פ"ט ה"ז). Regarding the הטבת הנרות/*the cleaning of the Neiros* each morning in preparation for the lighting at night, however, the *halacha* is that it can only be done by a Kohen. The Torah thus placed greater importance on the preparation than on the actual *mitzvah* of lighting the Menorah. This certainly conveys to us the importance of the preparation for all our *mitzvos*, and how we should invest ourselves in doing so properly, as we have discussed.

Being Prepared for the Future

Until here we have discussed specifically the preparation for *mitzvos* or accomplishments in *ruchniyus*. In this week's *parshah*, there is a related lesson, not about preparing for *ruchniyus* specifically, but about how we should be prepared for our future situations and how we should take action accordingly.

A Wise Man to Oversee the Storage Operation in Mitzrayim

After Yosef interpreted Paroh's dreams, he proceeded to advise Paroh how he should properly deal with the coming years of plenty and the years of famine to follow. ועתה ירא פרעה איש נבון וחכם / *And now, let Paroh seek a discerning, wise man, and he should appoint him over the land of Mitzrayim.* Yosef advised Paroh to seek a חכם / *a wise man* who would oversee the storage of the grain during the years of plenty in order to save it for the years of famine.

The *meforshim* discuss why Yosef specifically stipulated that a wise man should be appointed. After all, his advice seemed quite obvious and simple. Why couldn't any appointee oversee the storage process? The Ramban explains that there was a great deal of agricultural and other knowledge that was required in order to properly store the grain. Chazal reveal to us several of the techniques that Yosef used, and without these and other methods, the grain would spoil and rot before the famine would even begin. In fact, as Rashi tells us, all other attempts to store the grain ended in failure; only Yosef's storehouses remained intact. This was based on the *siyatta d'shmaya* that he had, along with his superior knowledge of all relevant wisdoms.

איזהו חכם הרואה את הנוולד / *Who is wise? One who sees the outcome.*

Rav Leib Chasman zt"l offered a different *p'shat* for why specifically a חכם was needed for the storage operation in Mitzrayim. He based his explanation on the Gemara which states איזהו חכם הרואה (תמיד י"ב) / *Who is wise? One who sees the outcome.* This refers to looking ahead at the consequences of our actions both those of this world and of the Next. Whereas a foolish person simply acts in the way which suits himself at the moment, the wise person thinks ahead and makes a careful consideration about where his action will lead. Only after reaching a firm conclusion that all the effects of his action are positive and satisfactory will he proceed with his action.

Chaim and Yankel are attending an upper-ended, high-class simchah. The delectable-looking cuisine which is being served is enough to make one's eyes glaze over and one's mouth water. These two men have different approaches regarding the manner that they will partake of the foods.

Chaim samples all the food being served, taking care not to overlook even one dish. He returns for second helpings as well, for all the foods which were especially tasty on his palette. As each new dish is served, it seems as though Chaim has not eaten since the day before. He begins anew with full zest and eagerness.

Yankel is a wise person, and he thinks ahead to how he will feel a day later. He realizes that if he overstuffs himself now, he will be terribly sick to his stomach the next day. He finds one or two dishes that look appealing to him, and he takes himself a moderate-sized portion. When he finishes, he exits the dining area so that he should not be tempted to take more than he can handle.

The next day, the wisdom of Yankel's choice is clearly evident. Chaim has terrible stomach pains, and he sorely regrets his behavior the day before. Yankel, though, feels completely fine.

יודע/Knowing vs רואה/Seeing

To understand the Gemara on a deeper level, Rav Chasman made a דיוק in the language of Chazal. Chazal do not say that a *chacham* is הנולד את היודע/one who **knows** the future; they rather say את רואה הנולד/one who **sees** the future. What is the difference between these two terminologies?

The answer is that in truth, most people know the future. They realize where reckless behavior will lead them, and the positive effects of behaving properly. What then is the difference between a wise person and all other people? A wise person is not content to merely know what the outcome will be; he actually visualizes the outcome to himself in his mind. It is with this clear picture in his head that he has the ability to control himself.

We illustrate with the following simple *mashal*:

Avi listened to the weather forecast one morning, and he heard that there is an almost 100% chance of rain that day. As he leaves his house, Avi considers taking along an umbrella. After about a second of deliberation, he shrugs and decides not to bother with it. After all, right now it is a completely sunny day,

without a cloud in the sky. What will be when it rains? He shoves this question aside in his mind and rationalizes to himself that he'll 'figure it out'.

Another day, it is already raining when Avi is leaving his house. Not wishing to become soaking wet, Avi takes an umbrella with him.

What is the difference between these two scenarios? Did Avi not hear the forecast in the first incident? Why is he ignoring the rain? He clearly does not enjoy becoming soaking wet, as demonstrated in the second incident, and he clearly knew that the rain was coming. Why did he not protect himself against it?

*The answer is that although Avi knew about the rain in the first incident, he did not see it. Only when he actually sees the rain in front of himself, as in the second incident, is he moved to take action. If Avi would be a *chacham*, however, he would internalize the message of the forecast, and he would picture himself becoming soaking wet in the upcoming rainstorm. Through this, he will spare himself that discomfort later in the day.*

If people do not train themselves to dwell and reflect upon the outcomes of their actions, the mere knowledge will not help them. This reality is not based on one's powers of logical reasoning, but despite it. Hashem specifically created people with the tendency to ignore what is not in front of them in order that there can be a choice in the path they will choose. Although we are aware of the consequences that our actions will generate both in this world and the Next, we still have the free-will to ignore these realities if we choose, and to follow our *yetzer hara*, *chas v'shalom*. Our challenge is to ingrain and internalize within ourselves what the outcomes of our actions are, so that we will actually see those consequences in front of us and base our decisions accordingly.

One Who Would See the Years of Hunger

Based on this theme, Rav Chasman explains why it was necessary for the overseer of the grain-storage operation in Mitzrayim to be a *chacham*, as Yosef had advised:

Before the seven years of hunger would arrive, there were going to be seven years of plenty. During those years, there would be such a surplus of grain that it would actually get in the way. It would be impossible to walk without stepping on grain. People would look for ways to be rid of their grain. During such years, would it be possible to convince people to save grain for the years of hunger? True, they were aware in their minds of the coming of years of hunger, and of the need to save grain. And they would indeed try to do so to an extent. However, to properly save the grain in the urgent manner that was needed, was beyond the mental capacity of most people. Given the present situation of the tremendous surplus of food, they just could not bring themselves to alter their attitude, and to treat grain as if it were actually something precious, worthy of being stored down the last drop.

To act with the proper seriousness and urgency, advised Yosef Hatzadik to Paroh, would require a *chacham*. This man would have a different picture in front of him during the years of plenty than would the common person. While everyone else saw a surplus of grain, this wise man would see a shortage. With the knowledge that a famine was imminent – just a few short years away – he would visualize to himself how people would be starving in the streets, desperately scrounging for a single seed of grain. He would see in his mind's eye a person inadvertently wasting a piece of grain and being rebuked for this by family members or co-workers. He would see how the price of grain would be as of an expensive medicine, and how each piece grain would be looked at as a priceless treasure.

Only with such a vision could a person undertake the operation of storing the grain with the necessary dedication and commitment. He would use his quality of **רואה את הנולד** to genuinely **see** the great need for the grain that would be in existence in the future, and he would thus have the ability to store the grain in commensuration to the need that would exist.

This illustration is relevant to our times as well. When people are blessed to make a simchah, they will generally have an abundance of food prepared, in order to ensure that there will be enough for everyone. Afterward, they are not sure what to do with the surplus, and often, people can be found throwing away large amounts of perfectly edible and delicious food. It is true that it is not always possible to find a use for all the extra

food, but some of this practice also stems from a lack of appreciation for the value of food, based on the affluent lifestyle that we live in. People simply cannot conjure images in their minds of the way things would look in a shortage r"l. They cannot imagine how in such times people would scrape together the last bits of cholent from a pan, hoping it can last them for one more night's supper. Although we are blessed to live differently, we should still not lose sight of the fact that it is a bracha that we are privileged to have, and we should not misuse it by losing our appreciation for it.

רואה את הנולד

The lesson for us from this theme is obvious. We must train ourselves to become **רואה את הנולד** / *seeing the outcome* of our own actions. This applies both to the reward and punishment of the Next World, and to the outcomes that we observe in this world. We must train ourselves not to simply live in the moment, but to view our actions with a discerning eye, carefully considering their consequences in our minds, and visualizing them in our minds so that we can act properly based on our knowledge of these consequences.

Let us bs" d take this dual lesson from Chanukah and from this week's *parshah*. Let us learn to think ahead, both in regard to preparing for our *mitzvos* and our *ruchniyus* in the appropriate manner.

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